## REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the examination of the application. In view of the remarks that follow, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections.

Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) or alternatively under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being allegedly unpatentable over US 2004/0070782, hereinafter *Mihira*.

According to the present invention, a first control program includes a first API that is configured to receive, with the use of a predefined function, a request relating to an image processing from the second control program. In addition, a second control program includes a second API that is configured to receive a request relating to an image processing from an external source, ***wherein commands, parameters, and syntax for controlling the hardware resource are released to the public for incorporation by external users into software supported by the second API***.

It is noted that *Mihira* lacks any disclosure that teaches or suggests the above features of the invention. Because of the deficiency, *Mihira* cannot achieve the advantageous effect of the present invention. That is, the image processing apparatus according to the present invention allows easy extension of the functionality to an external source, and that extension is made with no or little alterations to existing applications. In contrast, the image processing apparatus according to *Mihira* totally differs in structure from the present invention and thus cannot achieve the advantageous effect described above.

The Examiner contends that the API 51, API 52 and elements 25 - 27 of *Mihira* correspond to the claimed second control program. It is noted, however, that both the API 51 and the WSF 27 merely pass to SF 28 a processing request that is received from an external source with the use of SOAP. More importantly, there is no teaching or suggestion in *Mihira* that the elements 25 and 26 are configured to receive a request relating to an image processing from an external source, and which the converts the received request to a command supported by the first API, ***wherein commands, parameters, and syntax for controlling the hardware resource are released to the public for incorporation by external users into software supported by the second API.***

Thus, the cited portions *Mihira* fail to disclose a combination as now defined by the independent claims.

Furthermore, independent claim 7 states that the second control program includes a second API for receiving a second request relating to image processing from an external source, and converts the received second request to a command supported by the first API. Independent claim 13 states that the second control program includes a second API for receiving a third request and converts the received third request to a command supported by the first API. Claim 18 recites, among other features, that the second control program includes a second API for receiving a third request relating to image processing from an external source, and converts the received third request to a command supported by the first API.

*Mihira* is totally silent on the features that ***commands, parameters, and syntax for controlling the hardware resource are released to the public for incorporation by external users into software supported by the second API.***

Dependent claims 21-23 each recite the second API as a collection of sets of functions that are predefined by the first control program that are defined by a single collective function. In a non-limiting example described in Applicants' published specification at paragraph [0047], the external API 361 is a collection of a plurality of sets of functions that are predefined. For example, when a series of operations performed by a specific device is defined as functions A, B and C, the three functions are defined collectively as function D in the external API 361. Because a series of operations is defined by a single function, an external user is allowed to call a series of operations by calling the function D from a PC 50. The feature of the second API is not disclosed in *Mihara*.

In the event the Examiner continues to maintain the previous rejections, the Examiner is asked to cite with specificity where the combination of features discussed above are cited in *Mihara*.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the pending rejections, and to find the claims in condition for allowance.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.
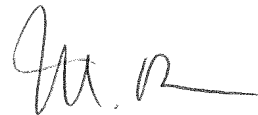
Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this response or the application in general, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

Date: July 12, 2010

By: _____

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